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Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4166th meeting

Thursday, 29 June 2000, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Levitte	(France)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Cappagli
	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahmed
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mr. Theron
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Ms. Soderberg

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

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00-50977 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Portugal and Yemen in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Tessema (Ethiopia), Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Monteiro (Portugal) and Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 21 June 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Dr. Hussein Hassouna, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, to participate in the Council's forthcoming discussion on the situation in Somalia."

That letter has been published as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2000/623.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Hassouna.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

I invite Mr. Prendergast to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Prendergast: With your permission, Mr President, I shall review briefly the political, security and humanitarian developments in Somalia since my most recent briefing to the Security Council, in informal consultations on 23 May.

Members of the Council will recall that on 22 September last year, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti put forward his plan for peace in Somalia in a speech to the General Assembly here in New York. Consultations followed with a wide range of Somali leaders, and on 21 March, he convened a meeting of 50 Somali intellectuals, who were invited, in their personal capacity, to advise on the peace process. Following those discussions, the Somalia National Peace Conference was formally opened in Djibouti on 2 May.

The delegates to the Conference consisted of elders, traditional leaders and politically active Somalis. All elders, with the exception of about three quarters of the elders of the Issak clan from the self-styled "Somaliland", took part in that phase of the Conference. From May, until it ended on 13 June, the meeting of the elders focused on reconciliation among the clans and on working out an agenda and a list of delegates for phase II of the Conference. The final list of delegates includes a large number of political leaders, former government officials, Somalis from the diaspora and prominent members of civil society.

In spite of efforts by Djibouti and other members of the international community, a number of political leaders refused to take part in the Conference or even to send observers. Most prominent among them were Mohamed Ibrahim Egal of Somaliland and Hussein

Aidid, Osman Hassan Ali Atto and Muse Sudi "Yallahow" of the Hawiye clan. Some leaders who stayed out complained about what they saw as a lack of adequate consultation. Others appeared unhappy about the procedure by which delegates had been selected.

In connection with those who remain outside the process, by far the most serious obstacles are presented by the absence of the two "building blocks" — the self-styled Somaliland and "Puntland". The latter's leader, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, recently announced the withdrawal of the support of Puntland from the Conference. As regards Somaliland, Mr. Egal has reiterated his position that all options remained open provided that he could negotiate as Somaliland with legitimate leaders from what he termed the "south". The picture regarding Puntland seems a bit more complex. There have been popular demonstrations against the Yusuf administration and in support of the Conference in some five towns in Puntland. Moreover, some members of the Puntland delegation refused to be summoned back to Puntland, and Mr. Hassan Abshir Farah, former mayor of Mogadishu and former Minister in the so-called Puntland administration, was unanimously elected co-Chairman of the Conference. On the other hand, Hassan Mohamed Noor of the Rahanwein Resistance Army, who initially said he would not participate, subsequently joined the Conference. Djibouti is continuing its efforts to persuade certain faction leaders, particularly the Hawiye clan in the Mogadishu area, to revise their hitherto hostile attitude towards the Conference. There remains, therefore, the possibility of further changes in the list of participants at the Conference.

With regard to up-to-date information on the Conference and plans for the immediate future, I shall defer to the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, Ambassador Roble Olhaye, who, I understand, has travelled from the Conference site in Djibouti for this meeting. I therefore propose to limit myself to making a few key points about the Conference.

The total number of delegates to the second phase of the Conference, which opened formally on 15 June, is 920, with each major clan, as well as the Alliance of Minorities and women allocated a certain number of seats, as was agreed in the elders' meeting.

Secondly, the major issues on the agenda of the Conference include security, arms control and disarmament, the future of Mogadishu as capital and the transitional arrangements. A special committee made up of representatives of each participating group has been tasked with drafting documents, including a transitional charter for Somalia. Delegates established another special committee that has discussed mechanisms for future economic and social development. It was agreed that all assets should be returned to their rightful owners through a procedure to be formulated by future authorities.

Finally, on this score, we understand that the leadership of the Conference asked, and Djibouti agreed, that the deliberations be extended for a further two weeks, until 15 July. The aim of the delegates, we understand, would be to come up by then with an interim charter and to select the delegates for a Transitional National Assembly, which will, in turn, select the members of a Transitional National Administration for Somalia.

Turning to the humanitarian aspects of Somalia, during the long, dry *jilaal* season, Gedo, Bakool and northern Hiran regions were considered the worst drought-affected areas of southern Somalia. Three weeks of heavy rainfall from the end of April through the second week of May led to good crop potential, improved access to water and pasture regeneration in most areas. However, there has been little, if any, rainfall since then. Without more rain, drought conditions may again prevail. Crop development would falter, leading to poor harvest levels. Already, 750,000 people across Somalia are highly vulnerable following three consecutive years of below-normal rainfall and dwindling household resource capacities. Crop failure and/or renewed conflict could place fragile livelihoods at risk and generate acute humanitarian crisis in some regions. The situation in the Gedo region is the most alarming.

Water safety in Somalia has always been of paramount importance. Under what in Somalia are termed "normal" conditions, only 25 per cent of the population have access to safe, potable water, but recent rains are expected to ease the severity of the problem. Harvested water contributes some 60 per cent of drinking water, with river water and boreholes accounting for a further 25 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively. However, in drought-affected areas such as northern Gedo and Bakool, boreholes will remain an important source of water. At the moment, it is estimated that only 35 per cent of Somalia's boreholes

are functioning, due to lack of maintenance, poor construction or conflict-related destruction.

Nine nutritional surveys conducted over the past year have reported malnutrition rates of over 20 per cent. I would just like to mention to the Council that a level of 15 per cent is generally accepted as the emergency threshold. Most recently, a survey by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the Gedo region identified 21.5 per cent of children as moderately to severely malnourished. High malnutrition rates indicate poor prospects for livelihood sustainability in the face of crop failure or renewed conflict. So the foundations for future acute crises are being laid. In order to reduce malnutrition in the worst hit areas, the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the World Health Organization need more resources so as to enhance field assessment capacity and integrate interventions to address the multiple needs of the population at risk.

The 2000 United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Somalia, which requested $50.5 million, has received less than 30 per cent of that figure to date. That is a stark figure.

If I may turn for a moment to security, United Nations agencies continue to monitor the security situation in Somalia as part of early warning and emergency preparedness efforts. In order to provide a safer operational environment, the United Nations agencies are enhancing efforts to monitor and prevent future incidents through increased field coordination and community liaison and the implementation of a humanitarian principles programme to structure relationships with de facto authorities.

Personal safety and security remain part of the risk of humanitarian assistance delivery in Somalia and continue to affect all aspects of those activities. I regret to say that the lives of humanitarian staff continue to be lost or put at risk and that, given conditions in Somalia, this is often with impunity. In the most recent fatal incident, on 6 June this year, Mr. Dieter Krasemann, a German national who was working for a German non-governmental organization called Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), was killed in Burao, Somaliland. Mr. Krasemann, who was the GTZ project manager for a demobilization project, was reportedly stabbed in the neck by someone who was called a madman. The Egal administration promised to investigate the killing and requested assistance in having an international psychologist examine the individual, who is under arrest.

On 8 June, a European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) flight was fired upon and struck in a wing as it landed in Merka. The elders in the area claim that this was the act of a disturbed young man with an AK-47. ECHO flights to Merka were immediately suspended. On 11 June, the United Nations announced the suspension of all United Nations common air-service flights to Merka and transferred the common air-service refuelling and transit operations to Baidoa.

I should like to end by making a number of observations. While some personalities and so-called warlords have stayed away from the Somalia National Peace Conference, Djibouti has made commendable efforts to assist the people of Somalia to resolve their conflict by peaceful means. What is taking place in Djibouti is a unique political experience for Somalis. This is the first time that Somali elders from all parts of Somalia have met; it is the first time that representatives of the grass-roots of almost all clans have discussed ways and means of rebuilding their country in a process based on consensus-building from the bottom up; and it is the first time that Somali women have been actively involved. Although Djibouti is acting as host and facilitator, it is clear that the process is Somali-owned. That, it seems to me, is very important. The Djibouti initiative, which has relied on Somalia's traditional system of clans in organizing the Conference, appears to be very much on the right track.

There have been many false dawns in relation to Somalia over the years, but the international community — and, I would suggest, the Security Council in particular — must not fall prey to cynicism or despair, or give up on Somalia. On the contrary, it will be important to encourage as wide a participation in the Conference as possible by giving renewed support to the Djibouti initiative and to the Conference at this stage and by calling on all Somalis to take part in the Conference. We believe that the support of the Council would offer the best deterrence against obstruction that may come from some circles whose privileges and capacity to profit from disorder are threatened by a move towards peace.

We understand that, so far, the Conference has been almost entirely financed by Djibouti. This is placing an intolerable burden on a small State. Again,

we would suggest that it is time for the international community to consider seriously how best to assist Djibouti in its peace initiative for Somalia, especially in material ways. No doubt, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti will elaborate on this aspect during his statement.

Given the worrying humanitarian situation in Somalia, the less than enthusiastic response to the 2000 United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Somalia is a cause for serious concern. I hope that this open debate will contribute to the sensitization of the donor community to Somalia's acute needs and will encourage a more generous response in the near future.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Sir Kieran Prendergast very much for his briefing, which, in describing the overall situation in Somalia and the context in which the Conference undertaken on the excellent initiative of the President of Djibouti is taking place, was a perfect introduction to our debate.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): I wish to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month, during which you have already displayed your diplomatic and political acumen. May I also extend our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Wang Yingfan.

Let me, at the outset, state how deeply grateful the Somali people — and, indeed, the Government of Djibouti — are for your praiseworthy initiative to schedule a public debate on Somalia during France's presidency. Such a rare debate on Somalia is taking place at the most opportune moment, when a crucial Conference to restore lasting peace and government is now under way in my country. No doubt, such a mark of goodwill towards the people of Somalia will immeasurably boost the morale of the Conference participants and help them to reach a settlement quickly.

The efforts of the Secretary-General in this process have been exemplary. His constant encouragement and support for the Conference and its goals have been pivotal. His call for a unified Somalia in which there exist peace, democracy and development has instilled a realization among the participants that high-level international support and awareness of their efforts are there.

We must also mention the tireless work of the Secretary-General's Representative for Somalia, Mr. David Stephen, who has been in Djibouti since February, continuously interacting with delegates, elders and Djibouti officials to realize the Conference and its successful conclusion.

It may be instructive for me to provide some description to the Council of the actual Conference settings. Any gathering of so many people for such an extended period of time obviously entails strenuous financial and logistical effort. Djibouti is now in the third month of catering to the needs of some 2,000 Somali delegates, elders and observers. Many were transported by air to Djibouti from locations around Somalia at Djibouti's expense. To facilitate the focus and concentration of participants and to isolate them from the diversions and pressures of the capital city, the Conference is being held 40 kilometres away at Arta, a resort town on a hill with a spectacular view of the Red Sea. All private homes have been claimed by the Government to house delegates. In fact, local residents are now a minority. All the requirements of this large contingent of people for food, transport, accommodation and amenities are being met by Djibouti. We have also brought in over 40 Somali singers, composers, poets and comedians to drive home the culture of peace, accommodation and brotherhood. The meeting itself is held in a giant tent. There are no class or social distinctions evident among the participants, who include over 100 women, representatives of all minorities in Somalia, a number of warlords and all clans.

A distinctive feature of this Conference has been the extensive coverage of the proceedings by satellite and on the Internet, allowing Somalis and other interested observers to follow the Conference from anywhere around the globe on a daily basis. The web site "Somalia-rebirth", which we started, receives some 5,000 hits per day and is evidence of the widespread interest in the Conference.

Clearly, the financial burdens and pressures of this all-out effort have proved daunting for a country of Djibouti's size and resources. Djibouti therefore urgently calls on the international community, which has an interest in the final achievement of Somalia's

rebirth, to contribute generously to this enormous burden, almost exclusively borne by us thus far.

For over a decade Somalia has been an international concern, as well as an embarrassment. The very word "Somalia" has come to denote international failure and futility in restoring peace, security and order in a troubled country. Following the widespread revolt against brutal oppression and mismanagement, the country was plunged deeper into chaos and sustained life without government, administration, services or peace. The victorious factions and clans simply turned their weapons upon each other. This violent interfactional fighting resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent Somalis and spread an inevitable air of doom over the country's very survival.

We are all aware of the international community's reaction in the early part of the past decade and its intervention to prevent total disaster and save the country. However, with little to lose, certain faction leaders chose to challenge the United Nations presence in the country and, with the withdrawal of United Nations peacekeeping forces, the situation once again began a spiralling descent into chaos and insecurity.

Time and again, golden opportunities to bring this self-destruction to a halt have been cynically ignored. As we have pointed out in previous statements, it came to be seen that the essential premise, rationale and basis of this continuing conflict were all false and that in the final analysis, the sum total of what was at stake was little more than the excessive egos, personal agendas and fantasies of grandeur of a self-anointed few. The utter disregard for the state and condition of unarmed civilians was stunning to the outside world and became more so as the years rolled by with no apparent resolution in sight.

Sadly, the problem of the warlords is not confined to Somalia, but is found in all corners of the African continent, if not throughout the world. The recent, if not continuing histories of Liberia, Angola, Sierra Leone, Congo and other countries provide a widespread and disturbing regional tapestry of violence and conflict. As has been said so often, correcting this dreadful situation is largely the responsibility of Africa, its people and regional organizations and their sustained and demonstrated will. But it has often also been recognized and stated that the continent cannot be expected to do it alone, without outside help. Where there is evidence of a determination of the people to resolve their problems, the international community should be relied upon to play a constructive role in achieving a final resolution.

With regard to Somalia, such an occasion has fortunately presented itself. Responding to the historic statement of my President, Ismail Omar Guelleh, at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly last year, in which he called for the citizens of Somalia to make themselves heard in order to see to it that their interests, needs, well-being and future received priority, the people of Somalia began to speak out in near unison. Their action was overwhelming and spontaneous, encouraging Djibouti to formalize its proposals in an initiative which received successive support from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States, the United Nations Secretary-General and, of course, this Council. The first phase of the Conference, which had been preceded by a great deal of preparation over the previous nine months, began in Djibouti on 2 May and concluded in early June. This was the most difficult phase of the process, since it was devoted exclusively to healing, reconciliation and overcoming the past.

More than 200 elders and traditional leaders from every part of the country conducted intensive intra- and inter-clan dialogue, seeking to reconcile, forgive one another, overcome a painful past and prepare the ground for the second phase of the Conference, dealing with political issues. This phase was the central pillar of the whole process, and special recognition goes to the tenacity, wisdom and sincerity of the elders. Over 900 official delegates and more than 1,000 others from everywhere are participating in the second phase, which started on 15 June.

Opening the second phase, President Ismail Omar Guelleh warned the Somali people not to repeat past mistakes that led to the collapse of the State. He was blunt in his remarks, and said:

> "If the disease is not properly diagnosed, if people do not ask what went wrong, if they are not careful to avoid falling into the trap again, all those efforts will be in vain. Please keep that in mind. You may want to discuss and analyse the source of Somalia's demise as a State and how to prevent it from ever occurring again. Learn from history. Make sure that the new State that you are

about to reorganize does not carry within itself the germ that may terminate it in the future. Try to establish a new State that is different from the failed one, based on healthy and strong pillars, responsive to the real needs and true aspirations of the masses and based on justice, fairness, democracy and respect for the rights of the individual."

He continued, saying:

"The State must be free from past ills, including abuse of State authority, oppression and dictatorship, clannism and neglect of the common good, disrespect and disregard of the law, misappropriating State property and treating it as personal property, and disrespect for good Somali values and Islamic teachings."

Even prior to the Conference, there was a flurry of activity as Somalis continuously descended on Djibouti, seeking more information and clarification, as well as providing valuable input into the preparatory phase. The President of Djibouti himself visited a number of countries, both within and outside the region, to advance the process and delegations were sent to various regions of Somalia to consult with traditional and political leaders. In March and April of this year, a number of events took place, including a symposium that brought together over 60 Somali professionals, administrators, peace activists and academics, about 20 elders to consult extensively with the President and over 30 businessmen. All these groups issued statements and recommendations.

We have undertaken all these efforts to broaden the base of consultations in order to render the process inclusive and transparent. We have clearly stated all along that the current process is not designed to undermine any of the existing administrative regions that have achieved a measure of relative peace and stability. On the contrary, these units will be key components of any national framework. The ultimate objective of the entire process will be peace, government, legitimacy and reconstruction. It was important, however, to guard the process against divisive personal, clan or regional politics, preset prescriptions and narrow agendas associated with a few individuals or a specific clan or clans.

Many Somalis believe that a central Government enjoying absolute, almost stifling power, accountable to a single person alone, contributed largely to clannism, corruption, waste and excessive violations of human rights. A clear separation, therefore, between central and regional powers, as well as the separation of powers between the branches of government, including a system of accountability, checks and balances, are of paramount importance. The agenda items before the Conference seek to instil a decentralized system of governance, be it regional or federal.

Our approach is holistic, as are those of IGAD, the OAU and the United Nations, insofar as this process embraces the whole of Somalia as one entity. An approach which is not holistic is unrealistic and the onus lies on those who diverge to demonstrate otherwise. The Conference is the only forum for tackling pernicious and divisive national issues.

There are, of course, some who derive considerable benefit out of the current chaotic drift in Somalia and who are in the business of continuously issuing misleading, false and baseless statements against the Conference because they are determined to thwart any meaningful attempt to restore a sovereign national framework in Somalia. In the war-ravaged and politically fragmented Somalia, the situation encourages individuals to pursue profit motives and the accumulation of personal wealth at the expense of national cohesion. So there is an economic dimension to the refusal of some to come to terms with reality, and certainly some of the current rancour is not internal in character. As my President has stated:

"The majority should not remain captive any longer to a few who would not care for the future of the Somali people. Anyone who refuses to be part of the Somali peace process will be left behind. Then it will be up to the Somali people to decide what to do about them."

The international community needs to be cautious and to avoid showing an unwarranted tendency to entertain ideas that impinge on the territorial integrity of Somalia through spurious guises and approaches.

Djibouti, conscious of possible or contrived allegations, has taken into full consideration all areas of concern. Most important of all, we have made certain that the Conference should be — and should be seen to be — fully representative of the entire Somali society: no sector, group, region or individual is excluded, even those individuals with name recognition who make headlines with their refusal to participate

and who speak only for themselves and not for the people in their respective regions. Defying all odds, the people have all come from every district and region of the entire country, regardless of whether a certain leader is for or against the Conference.

The second phase of the Somalia National Peace Conference has made great progress, discussing a wide range of issues. Prime among them are: causes and consequences of the civil strife; human rights; healing and reconciliation; overcoming the past; the national capital; rebuilding the State; return of property unlawfully confiscated; negative economic and social consequences; disarmament and security; and transitional mechanisms, including the constitution, legislature, Government and judiciary. The list of tasks is impressive. The Conference is expected to conclude its work by 15 July and to culminate in the establishment of a transitional assembly and in the election of a president and a prime minister.

The Conference, and the entire process, can well be seen as an innovative approach to the question of conflict-resolution and nation-building. The standard practice has been to concentrate indefinitely on the adversaries and on repeated attempts to bring them together in agreement. Djibouti, however, has reversed that strategy because of repeated failures with the warlords over the past decade, and has sought instead to empower the disenfranchised and unarmed civilian population: the vast majority; the ones who are really suffering; the ones who were betrayed. The people saw this as their last chance, given the level of pervasive hopelessness. President Guelleh's call struck the right chord. The people began challenging the armed groups and other small dictators, to claim their legitimate rights, demanding peace, government and their future.

So, Somalia appears to be on its way to getting back on track towards genuine dialogue. A clear consensus is emerging that holds that this may be the last opportunity to salvage Somalia, and that it must be seized. The process is open, as I have already said; it is transparent and inclusive, and it has been beneficial to all Somalis. They can never go back or relapse to the era of the 1990s. They have awakened and have the will to continue until they attain their legitimate rights.

Let me emphasize once again that the Conference truly represents the broadest, most participatory assemblage ever in Somalia's history. Never before has an important gathering been so representative nationally across the country and so deeply representative in terms of clan, class and economic standing. It has been acknowledged by Somalis everywhere as unique. There is no place for scepticism, false pride or mutual jealousy. The Government of Djibouti is fully aware that IGAD, OAU member States, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the United Nations have all welcomed, fully supported or endorsed the initiative and the peace plan. It is to be hoped that their support for the Conference, as well as for the outcome of the Conference, will be readily available.

The draft presidential statement to be issued following this debate goes a long way to recognizing the current state of affairs in Somalia and the efforts under way. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all members of the Council for their renewed tireless efforts for the revival of that nation, which experienced collapse some 10 years ago and which is now making every effort to come back and take its rightful place in the community of nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Representative of Djibouti for his extremely complete presentation on the Conference on which President Guelleh has taken such a fine initiative. I thank him too for his account of the progress already made by many representatives of Somali society towards the reconstruction of their State.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is grateful to the French delegation for devoting a public meeting to consideration of the situation in Somalia. That is a positive initiative that reflects our interest in that country. We also thank Sir Kieran Prendergast and the representative of Djibouti for the useful information they have provided the Council.

I wish to make a number of comments on the situation in Somalia. First, I stress the urgent need for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the crisis in Somalia based on respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of that country. In that context, the priority objective must be the restoration of State authority in that country, which has been afflicted by years of war.

Secondly, and along the same lines, the Security Council should fully support efforts to resolve the crisis in Somalia, in particular the peace initiative of President Guelleh which the representative of Djibouti has just described. I would recall that the Organization

of African Unity (OAU) has great hopes for that initiative, to which it has already given its complete support. The initiative is a positive development towards the settlement of the crisis in Somalia and is therefore a sign of hope that deserves to be welcomed. That is why we encourage the efforts under way to bring that initiative to fruition.

Thirdly, the Security Council must follow the process of national reconciliation, the main responsibility for which, I would recall, lies with the Somali people themselves. In that connection, we await with interest the completion of the Somalia National Peace Conference. The representative of Djibouti has just described the progress that has been made in that connection. I take this opportunity to appeal to all the Somali parties, including the warlords, to join the process now under way. We also welcome the efforts of the Government of Djibouti to ensure that the Conference proceeds satisfactorily.

Fourthly, I want to express my delegation's grave concern about the very difficult humanitarian situation and about attacks against humanitarian personnel. We call upon all the parties to ensure the security, safety and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel and to ensure free access to those who need assistance. We note with satisfaction the international community's coordination efforts.

Fifthly, the return of peace to Somalia will require considerable political and financial support from the international community, and we encourage all States to respond generously to United Nations appeals so that the Organization's relief and reconstruction activities can continue.

Sixthly, the Security Council must ensure strict implementation of the arms embargo. Because of the violations to which many sources attest, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) should be revitalized.

The draft presidential statement which I circulated in yesterday's consultations on behalf of the non-aligned caucus for consideration by the Council, is centred on those points.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the Council on Somalia. We think it is timely that the Council revisit the subject in this Chamber for an in-depth exchange of views on the situation in that country with the participation of the larger membership of the Organization. We would also like to thank Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his succinct yet comprehensive briefing. We have also benefited from the equally useful briefing by the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, Ambassador Roble Olhaye, to whom we express our appreciation.

For far too long, the international community has become disengaged from the tragedy in that part of the Horn of Africa, perhaps because of its past disenchantment. Today, Somalia remains a dysfunctional or failed State. This state of no-war and no-peace prevailing in Somalia cannot be accepted on a permanent basis. As an expression of our support and solidarity with the hapless people of Somalia, we must make every effort to explore avenues for a political settlement of the conflict in that unfortunate country. Our sense of fellowship with the people of Somalia demands that we become fully engaged once again with their country.

It is true that our experience of involvement in the affairs of Somalia has largely been negative. We may want to forget the experience, but we should not discard the lesson. Drawing from the lesson of the past, our re-engagement with Somalia should be aimed, this time around, not at imposing a solution, but to working with the Somali people to find a solution that is viable and acceptable to them — a solution which they have a hand in crafting.

In this regard, my delegation warmly welcomes the peace initiative by the President of Djibouti. We commend President Ismail Omar Guelleh for his bold and timely initiative and his tireless efforts in promoting it out of his sincere concern at the situation in his neighbouring country and his commitment to bring a lasting political settlement of the conflict there. The initiative by Djibouti deserves the strong and unqualified support of the international community. Initiated by a concerned and close neighbour of Somalia, it is virtually home-grown. As Sir Kieran put it, it is "Somali-owned". It pursues a "bottom-up" approach, the approach preferred by the international community, focusing on the people, who really matter, and not on the so-called leaders and warlords who, with their vested and selfish interests, have destroyed the Somali nation.

We are gratified to note that the efforts of President Guelleh have born some positive results and that with the support of members of Somali civil society there is now a glimmer of hope that at long last the civil war in Somalia can be brought to an end, thereby enabling Somalia to recover from a crisis of exceptional complexity which had led to the collapse of the State and had destabilized the entire region of the Horn of Africa. It will allow the reintegration of Somali society and a restoration of the traditional Somali culture of tolerance and accommodation, of which we have often been reminded.

We are encouraged that the Somalia National Peace Conference has now moved into its second phase. Malaysia welcomes this development and hopes that it will pave the way for substantive talks among representatives of all sectors of Somali society on the question of the political future of their country. We also hope that it will lead to an agreement on the formation of a transitional arrangement that would safeguard Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and at the same time prepare the ground for a peaceful and lasting settlement. We are heartened to hear that in the past month or so, Somalis from every walk of life have been increasingly involved in the Djibouti-initiated peace process. They must be further encouraged by a manifestation of strong political and material support by the international community. This point was particularly underscored by Sir Kieran just now.

My delegation believes that a peaceful resolution of the Somali question would have a far-reaching stabilizing effect in a region mired in conflict. The loss of human life in the Horn of Africa on account of conflict and famine has been enormous. The escalating cost of providing humanitarian assistance continues to divert resources, which are always in short supply, from more productive development efforts. It is therefore critical that all diplomatic means be exhausted in support of the Djibouti initiative. We would urge all Somalis to join and support the peace initiative. We are fully cognizant of the fact that the journey towards full and final reconciliation and durable peace in Somalia is likely to be unpredictable and arduous.

We note that, although the Somalia National Peace Conference is a significant step forward, it has been overshadowed by the conspicuous non-participation of some faction leaders who continue to disagree with the objectives of the meeting and the process of reconciliation which it has launched, presumably because they are no longer at the centre of the process. Clearly, the main stumbling block in the peace process is the continued intransigence of the faction leaders. These leaders should realize that they have had their chance to resolve the conflict but have failed miserably and that the people's patience is at an end. They can no longer hold Somalia's destiny to ransom.

Nevertheless, because no lasting peace would be possible without internal reconciliation, every effort should be made to bring these leaders on board the peace initiative. They must be urged — indeed, pressured — both internally by the people themselves and externally by influential actors — to put aside their personal and parochial ambitions and to join the peace process in the larger interest of the Somali nation. This remains a major challenge confronting the international community.

As part of this challenge, it is imperative for the international community to deny these leaders of the means to wage war, by continuing to maintain and to more vigorously enforce the arms embargo on Somalia, as established by resolution 733 (1992). We should be mindful that the civil war could not have been prolonged without the illegal flow and easy availability of arms into Somalia, and we should remind ourselves of our continuing responsibility in this respect.

Malaysia continues to be deeply concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Somalia and has expressed its appreciation to the efforts of international aid agencies and other relief organizations which have provided succour to the people of Somalia. We condemn the continuing acts of violence against humanitarian personnel and call on all armed groups to fully cooperate with humanitarian relief efforts and guarantee the safety and freedom of all aid workers.

My delegation believes that it is fitting and timely for the Council to pronounce itself once again on the issue of Somalia and to reiterate its strong support for the efforts for a political settlement made by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and to endorse and support the Djibouti peace initiative. Its unambiguous support of the peace initiative will be a clear manifestation of the Council's and the Organization's commitment and active involvement in the important area of peacemaking, which we feel should be pursued in the current state of

no-war no-peace in Somalia so as to prevent the recurrence of a full-blown war.

That window of opportunity may not last long. We need to manifest the Council's willingness to assume its responsibilities under the Charter and reinvigorate its role in partnership with the regional actors, such as IGAD and the Organization of African Unity. We should not allow the Somali people to succumb to despair and a sense of helplessness. We must give them renewed hope and confidence for the future and strengthen their will to support the peace initiative without intimidation from their leaders. We must generate support for the dynamic that has been created by the Djibouti peace initiative and encourage and support its initiator and facilitator, President Guelleh, in his commendable and determined efforts. We cannot afford to be half-hearted in our approach. It is time for the international community to get out of the "Somali syndrome" that has affected us for so long, for we cannot let the people of Somalia down.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I too, would like to thank Sir Kieran for his briefing, which gave us a basic understanding of recent developments in Somalia. I would also like to thank very sincerely the Ambassador of Djibouti for his very detailed presentation on the creative and innovative efforts made by Djibouti to guide the peace process in Somalia. We are aware of the logistical and substantive difficulties and complexities that these efforts pose and we welcome the resolve with which they are being pursued.

Canada remains deeply concerned by the continuing instability in Somalia and by its negative impact on the security and well-being of the civilian population. We are convinced that concerted action and cooperation between the Security Council, the Organization of African Unity and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are essential to guarantee the effective participation of the international community in efforts to resolve the conflict in Somalia. This open meeting will be a useful contribution to the process.

We firmly support the lead role being played by IGAD as well as the initiative taken by the President Guelleh to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Somalia. We are happy, therefore, to be able to support the draft presidential statement which was submitted by Mali on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and which I hope the Council will soon adopt.

We urge President Guelleh to continue to give high priority to activities aimed at convincing Somali civil society to support this peace initiative despite the resistance of those who have no interest in seeing peace restored to Somalia.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada welcomes the sanctions committee's decision for the Chairman to undertake a fact-finding mission to neighbouring countries to assess the difficulties encountered in implementing the arms embargo.

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing abuse, with impunity, of human rights in Somalia. We continue to call upon Somali faction leaders to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Somali citizens.

Attacks perpetrated against humanitarian workers, particularly within southern and central Somalia, are unacceptable and only further inhibit the ability of the international and local organizations to assist and protect already vulnerable populations. We remind Somali faction leaders of their obligation to ensure the freedom of movement, safety and security of those seeking only to assist, including locally engaged staff, and to facilitate their access to affected population.

Mr. Theron (Namibia): I wish to join other delegations in thanking you, Sir, for convening this open meeting on the situation in Somalia. Let me also take this opportunity to thank Sir Kieran for the comprehensive and, indeed, useful briefing on the overall situation in that country. I would like to also thank the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, Mr. Roble Olhaye, for a useful update on the developments concerning the ongoing Somalia National Peace Conference in Djibouti. We wish to commend him for the dedicated, excellent and innovative manner in which his Government is organizing the Conference.

The question of Somalia will continue to be a cause of concern for the international community. This is particularly true for the Security Council, which is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. It is thus essential that the Council give its full support to the efforts of the Somali people to

rebuild their country. The absence of a central authority in Somalia and the country's division between antagonistic warlords and faction leaders, as well as the violations of the arms embargo against Somalia, are, among other things, of great concern to my delegation. The Somali people have suffered for too long and it is high time that favourable conditions are created so that they can decide the future of their country.

In our view, it is therefore imperative that the Security Council once again reassert its authority over the situation in Somalia, which continues to be a threat to peace and security in the region. The Council must support the peace process in Somalia, the purpose of which is to restore peace, stability and prosperity to that country. It is against this background that my delegation welcomed and fully supported the Djibouti peace initiative of convening of the Somalia National Peace Conference to enable the Somali people to discuss the future of their country and with a view to creating structures for the normal functioning of their State.

In this regard, we strongly believe that the Djibouti initiative should be endorsed by this Council as the only viable mechanism for the peaceful resolution of the question of Somalia. We also call upon the international community to provide financial and technical support so that the Government of Djibouti can fulfil this task. I want here to echo Mr. Prendergast's words that the international community should not give up on Somalia, but rather continue to assist the peace process.

My delegation is greatly concerned at the reports we continue to receive from various sources regarding the flow of arms into Somalia, despite the Security Council resolutions imposing an arms embargo on that country. In this regard, we commend the efforts of the Chairman of the sanctions Committee for seeking ways and means to strengthen the sanctions regime against Somalia. We call upon Member States, particularly the neighbouring countries of Somalia, to assist the sanctions Committee by providing information related to violations of the arms embargo.

With regard to the humanitarian situation, we commend the excellent job being done by the humanitarian agencies, despite the difficult conditions in which they are operating. The agencies have been able to deliver assistance to the needy — especially the vulnerable groups, such as women and children — amid threats and killings of their workers by the militias. We were also concerned to hear from Mr. Prendergast this morning that as many as 750,000 people are considered highly vulnerable, following three consecutive years of below-normal rainfall and dwindling household resources. We again call upon the donor community to provide adequate financial resources to the humanitarian agencies to enable them to meet the challenges ahead.

Mr. Ahmed (Bangladesh): Let me begin by thanking you, Sir, for scheduling this open debate on the situation in Somalia. My delegation considers it timely, particularly in view of the ongoing Somalia National Peace Conference. Let me also thank the Under-Secretary-General, Sir Kieran Prendergast, and the Permanent Representative of Djibouti for updating us on the latest developments in the Djibouti peace process.

The prolonged suffering of the Somali people — subjected to terror and intimidation — and the unbridled collapse into statelessness must stop. Today, more than 300,000 deaths, a near total destruction of the social and economic infrastructure, a vast majority of unschooled children and a raging famine-like situation are the essential features of Somalia. Seen in this context, the bold and untiring efforts of Djibouti, led by President Guelleh, deserve our all-round support and admiration. We fully endorse his initiative and those of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in seeking a political solution to the crisis in Somalia.

President Guelleh's approach is significant in many ways. Marking a new beginning, it has placed the Somali people and civil society at the centre of the peace process, as represented by various groups. As against the previous attempts at power-sharing between the warlords, which proved unsuccessful and yielded to anarchy, the Djibouti initiative seeks to build on what has been achieved. Yet, it does well not to accord a special status to certain entities in respect of participation in the process. The reason for taking this course is clear, as this should be a matter for the people of Somalia to decide. We consider this approach to be sensible and constructive. Apart from being inclusive, the process is also designed to glean ideas and inputs from the Somali diaspora. We support these principles.

The Somalia National Peace Conference began on 2 May with a well-detailed plan. We are pleased to note

that the initial objective of reconciliation among the clans through their elders was largely achieved through informal, albeit long, consultations.

Work on the core issue has begun with the formation of three committees to deal with issues such as the return of illegally occupied land and property, the election of members of Parliament, the status of "Somaliland" and the status of Mogadishu as the national capital.

It is disturbing to see attempts at blocking the peace process by those whose criminal behaviour and utter disrespect for human rights is the prime reason for the current state of affairs in this country. We strongly condemn the continuing attacks on the civilian population by the warlords and their armed groups. Fearful of losing their grip on illegal power as signs of confidence gradually return to the Somali people, many of the warlords have voiced opposition to the peace process. There are reports that the movements of those who would be willing to participate in the Peace Conference have been hindered. We should condemn such behaviour in one voice and call upon those responsible to stop such attempts to scuttle the peace process.

One factor out of many which has all along contributed to the worsening of the situation in Somalia is the wanton smuggling of arms. The outbreak of conflict elsewhere in the Horn has had a catalytic effect on the influx of illegal arms. In this regard, we call upon all States to cooperate with the relevant sanctions committee of the Council in making the arms embargo more effective.

Before concluding, let me touch upon the other problem that has long afflicted Somalia — that is, the combined effect of drought, disease and environmental degradation, which is perpetuating an endemic humanitarian crisis. The international community should do everything possible to ameliorate the situation while the peace process moves forward, creating conditions favourable to that end. We also underline here the absolute need to ensure a safe operating environment for the aid workers, who have put their lives at risk to save those of others.

Djibouti has mounted a monumental effort from its position as a small and developing country. The stakes are high, and we would not like to see this fail. We therefore call for a clear indication of support to go out from the Council. To that end, we fully endorse the presidential statement that we will adopt later today.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): Mr. President, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation to you for having convened this public meeting on the situation in Somalia. We also wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Sir Kieran Prendergast, and the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, Ambassador Roble Olhaye, for their introductory remarks, which have provided the framework for the Council's deliberations today.

There is no doubt that the crisis in Somalia has been one of the most complex and intractable which the Council has addressed over the past 10 years, during which there has indeed been little progress in the political situation. The numerous inter-clan and intra-clan rivalries, which have resulted in the inability of the faction leaders and warlords to agree on initiatives to end the crisis, have brought untold suffering to the people of Somalia. This has affected the will of the international community to continue its engagement in seeking a solution to the conflict.

It is against this background that my delegation commends the initiative of the President of Djibouti which has led to the convening of the Somalia National Peace Conference. As Ambassador Olhaye reminded us, the hallmark of the Conference has been the involvement of civil society, thus ensuring that the people of Somalia take full responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and peace.

It was a bold stroke for the Government of Djibouti to have gone beyond the warlords and clan leaders to the grass-roots level, and we hope that the broad-based consultations now taking place will result in a compromise which will reflect the needs and aspirations of the people of Somalia.

It is therefore important that the Security Council, through the presidential statement which we will adopt later today, send a strong signal of support for the Djibouti peace initiative and that the international community offer not only moral but material support for the Conference.

We also wish to commend the support shown by the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other neighbouring States of Somalia in the search for peace.

While noting the positive developments that have taken place at the Conference, we regret that some Somali leaders have rejected any peace proposal, preferring to perpetuate the misery that has been visited on the people of Somalia. We once again call on all the faction leaders to reject the violence and to participate in the Conference.

Somalia will need the assistance of the international community as it rebuilds the social and political basis of its society and seeks to bring about national reconciliation. The United Nations has to become involved in the facilitation of a peaceful solution to the conflict. In particular, we need to maintain a close and constructive relationship with the Government of Djibouti and with the other regional organizations in their efforts to broker peace. We have to effectively lay the groundwork for a sustainable peace so that the process of peace-building can begin.

My delegation wishes to join others in expressing the dire humanitarian situation of the majority of the people. Hundreds of thousands of persons have suffered from the cumulative effects of nearly one decade of armed conflict, a fractured economic infrastructure, low food production and the virtual absence of health and educational services.

We have noted the reports that nearly 1 million Somalis are at risk of facing severe food shortages. The United Nations system has been doing its utmost to provide humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance throughout Somalia under trying circumstances, and we wish to urge those countries that are able to contribute generously to the appeal made recently through the inter-agency consolidated process.

Finally, we wish to pay tribute to the humanitarian workers, some of whom have lost their lives or suffered injury in the service of the people of Somalia. We commend their selflessness and perseverance in the execution of their tasks in these most trying circumstances.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): We would like to thank you, Sir, for calling this open meeting on Somalia, Under-Secretary-General Prendergast for his briefing and Ambassador Roble Olhaye for his extensive oral report on the Djibouti peace initiative.

The Netherlands is certainly not surrendering to cynicism with regard to Somalia. To use Sir Kieran Prendergast's words, we are not giving up on Somalia, and we applaud the initiative of the President of Djibouti.

Meanwhile, we are aware that we are dealing with a country that has been without the structure of a state for several years. If we expect such a country to readopt statehood, it has to be a good State. Ambassador Olhaye made the same point, and we agree with him. We are not calling for statehood at any price.

Later in this debate, the representative of Portugal will make a statement on behalf of the European Union, which my delegation endorses. In addition to that statement, we would like only to make an observation of a more general nature.

I believe we all support the Djibouti peace initiative because no one wants Somalia to disintegrate beyond repair. We want Somalia to be reborn as one State, because we subscribe to the doctrine of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the sanctity of borders. Our support for that doctrine, however, is not entirely unqualified. Inviolate borders are a blessing if they enclose a country where fundamental rights are respected. If not, the borders themselves can become an instrument of coercion. If a State has not existed for a number of years, but certain parts of it have managed to organize themselves more or less successfully, the doctrine of inviolate borders cannot imply that these parts are expected to surrender their freedom and their success to just any political entity that is supposed to be the successor of the earlier State. The rebirth of Somalia, if it is to succeed, will have to be perceived as progress in all parts of the country. In the end, the responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and peace rests with all the Somali people.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation is grateful to Mr. Prendergast, the Under-Secretary-General, and to Ambassador Olhaye, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, for their briefings. We would also like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having convened this public meeting. This is the first open debate in the Security Council in recent years on the question of Somalia. We hope that this debate will give an impetus to efforts for an early resolution of the question of Somalia.

The past few months have witnessed a series of new developments in the peace process in Somalia.

The Somalia National Peace Conference has recently moved into its second phase, and the progress achieved so far is the result of joint efforts by all sides and is a reflection of the various Somali clans' strong desire for peace. We hope that the Somalia National Peace Conference will bear fruit as soon as possible and that the participants in the Conference will soon reach an understanding on core questions, such as the establishment of a transitional government and a transitional parliament.

We greatly appreciate the strenuous efforts of President Guelleh and the Government of Djibouti to attain peace in Somalia. The entire population of Djibouti supports the peace process in Somalia, and has made very valuable contributions to the process. We appeal to the international community to provide all necessary assistance to Djibouti so as to help it successfully implement President Guelleh's initiative. At the same time, we strongly urge the leaders of the main Somali factions who have stayed away from the National Peace Conference to manifest the necessary political courage and political wisdom to take part in the peace process. Any action detrimental to the attainment of peace in Somalia will be rejected by the Somali people.

The effective implementation of the arms embargo against Somalia will doubtless promote the peace process there. However, for too long the relevant sanctions have not been implemented. We hope that this situation will be rectified as soon as possible. In this regard, we would like to express our appreciation for the commitment of the Chairman of the sanctions Committee, Ambassador Ben Mustapha of Tunisia. We fully support his work and hope that the countries and regional organizations concerned will cooperate actively with him.

As a result of the prolonged civil strife, the humanitarian situation in Somalia remains very grave. We appreciate the efforts made by the humanitarian personnel who have been providing aid in Somalia for many years. We urge the armed groups to ensure the freedom and safety of humanitarian personnel and to provide the necessary guarantees for their access to the population.

The United Nations has experienced setbacks in Somalia. It should avail itself of this window of opportunity and increase its input with regard to Somalia, help Djibouti achieve success in its peace initiative as soon as possible and make a substantial contribution to the resolution of the question of Somalia.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia has always advocated the speedy attainment of a comprehensive political settlement and national reconciliation in Somalia, and the maintenance of a unified Somali State. As the Council knows, the plight of the Somali people is not the result of religious or ethnic antagonism, but of deep-seated inter-clan fragmentation and the ambitions of certain leaders. These are the main obstacles to the restoration of the unity of the country.

Experience over many years has shown that, despite the fact that there has been no lack of peace initiatives for Somalia, to a large extent, the viability of such initiatives has depended on the level of support for them within Somali society. In this context, as always, the main issue is whether or not it will be possible to include as broad a spectrum of Somali society and political forces as possible in the talks on the future of Somalia. Furthermore, the success of the peace process will continue to depend on the involvement of the leaders of the clan-based armed groups, who really control the situation in most regions of Somalia.

It is also in this context that we view the negotiating process that is taking place within the Somalia National Peace Conference being held in Djibouti, and we hope that it will achieve positive results. Comparing Djibouti's initiative to a ship over which the Somalis themselves should assume control is a very accurate way of describing the essence of what remains to be attained. It is also important that, at the international level, interested States continue to ensure favourable, non-confrontational conditions for a pan-Somali reconciliation based on principles that do not run counter to the territorial integrity and unity of Somalia.

We share the concern of the international community regarding the dire humanitarian situation in Somalia. Russia believes that the active work of the humanitarian organizations in the country should continue, given their key role in providing assistance to the population. Like other members of the Security Council, we are deeply concerned about the constant attacks on humanitarian personnel in various parts of Somalia, which impede their work and also make it

difficult to implement plans for a gradual transfer to the country of the offices of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies.

Russia's participation as an observer in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Partners Forum is proof of our desire to contribute to the settlement of conflict situations in the vast region of Eastern Africa and to ensure peace and stability there. Russia is involved on a regular basis in the work of the IGAD Partners Forum, within both the Committee on Somalia and the Committee on the Sudan. As a member of the Security Council and an old friend of the Somali people, Russia will continue to support the cause of restoring statehood to Somalia based on conditions that are in the interests of Somali society and of stability in the region as a whole.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): My delegation is gratified to have this opportunity to hear, in an open meeting, a first-hand account of the latest developments in the peace process in Somalia. We welcome this exchange of views on what the Security Council and the whole international community can and should do to support the efforts of the Somali people to bring peace, stability and prosperity back to their land.

Indeed, in terms of modern history, the experience of Somalia may represent a unique case of the return to the international community of a collapsed State. That is why we consider the efforts of the Government of Djibouti to be extremely important and commend its commitment to push forward the process of normalization in Somalia. The very fact that it has succeeded in going this far in implementing the peace plan — we thank Ambassador Olhaye of Djibouti for bringing us up to date and for providing his analysis of developments — is, indeed, evidence of the viability of its design and of a realistic approach to its realization.

We must recognize that what has already been achieved is considerable progress compared to previous attempts to restore the country. We must therefore not allow this latest effort to fail after having advanced to the stage where it is now, for this would have catastrophic consequences for the unity of Somalia and its people.

Separatism must not be allowed to set roots in Africa under any circumstances. In this context, the non-participation of Somaliland in the Djibouti Peace Conference, and especially the recent accusations by its leaders against Djibouti, are increasingly disturbing. We therefore support the idea that only the mounting pressure of the international community on the leadership of Somaliland, as well as on leaders of other entities and factions who continue to defy the ongoing peace process, can help break their intransigence and obstruction.

I would also agree that the present achievement has given rise to strong hopes for overall success, and this situation calls for consistent supportive action on the part of the Security Council and other international actors. Although the very process of restoring the national Government and the State of Somalia remains in the hands of the Somalis — or, as Sir Kieran rightly put it, is "Somali-owned" — the Security Council and the international community at large must be ready to provide practical support to these efforts — including by being prepared, at a certain stage, to recognize the provisional administration of the country after its formation by the future Transitional National Assembly. Such a step, I believe, will be crucial for a lasting settlement in Somalia.

Providing financial and technical support to the Conference and to its organizers is no less important for the continuation of the peace process. Started several months ago, it has already consumed a considerable amount of resources, which are close to their limit.

It is also important to look ahead and to expect that further support will be needed by the future Somali Government, which will encounter a great many problems inherited from the past. The decade of civil war and lawlessness has claimed the lives of thousands of innocent people and caused the destruction of hundreds of homes and villages and other private and public property, as well as the displacement of millions of Somalis. The international community should therefore also be prepared to provide support to the process of national reconciliation and to assist the Somali people in solving the problems of national reconstruction and development.

Decentralization and self-administration are important concepts in the peace initiative put forward by President Guelleh of Djibouti. In this connection, let me stress the importance of ensuring the country's stability by establishing a truly federal system of governance that would balance the power of the central Government.

In conclusion, let me wish the Government and the President of Djibouti every success in this noble endeavour, which is very much on the right track. It must be supported by the Security Council. We look forward to the presidential statement to be adopted shortly.

Ms. Soderberg (United States of America): I commend your leadership, Mr. President, in holding this open meeting today. I think Somalia has been on the agenda of the Council for many years. The more international attention that we can bring to the ongoing difficulties there, the better.

Last August, the Secretary-General appealed to the international community to engage actively in resolving the crisis in Somalia. Djibouti and President Guelleh took up that challenge. He and a broad range of Somali leaders worked diligently to promote the cause of peace and reconciliation in Somalia. What they have already achieved in terms of re-establishing a dialogue is impressive. Indeed, the discussions that have been taking place since 2 May, which have brought together leaders of civil society, women's groups, clan representatives and faction leaders, would have seemed impossible only a short while ago.

While some basic steps have been taken, there are still many hurdles ahead. Even if the current discussions in Djibouti produce a blueprint for an interim Government, we must remember that this is only the first step, and perhaps the easiest step, towards the rehabilitation of Somalia. The task of transforming that structure into a functioning, effective, permanent, representative Government will be far more difficult. The United States intends to remain fully engaged in those efforts, but only the commitment of the Somali people themselves can ensure its success. Once the Somalis have demonstrated through solid achievements on the ground that they are making this process work, the international community will want to review how best to support their efforts.

Given the previous failure of overly ambitious efforts to rebuild Somalia, the United States is committed to an incremental, long-term approach that seeks to rebuild the Somali polity from the bottom up through support for regional entities that emerge from participatory processes. These efforts offer, in our view, the best hope for the creation of a stable, durable and democratic Somalia. They should be seen as complementary to the work done by the Somalis convened at Arta.

In line with this approach, and in recognition of the positive and peaceful evolution taking place in some regions, we have focused our assistance on the areas of relative stability, including Somaliland and Puntland. Also, our humanitarian assistance strategy is evolving. Unconditional food aid distribution is increasingly being replaced with food-for-work activities, and our disaster assistance projects are placing greater emphasis on the activities that have a mitigation focus and a transitional nature, as opposed to pure relief.

We applaud the efforts of President Guelleh and the Government of Djibouti, and we will watch the unfolding of the current initiative with the utmost interest and encouragement. In the end, any effort to rebuild Somalia must be an all-inclusive process that enjoys the support of existing regional entities and that is based on a legitimate participatory process that derives from Somali civil society and rejects the predatory violence of the warlords.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express my appreciation for the format of this meeting on Somalia. Undoubtedly, the active and broad participation of the Members of our Organization will help us find a solution to the conflict.

We also wish to express our thanks for the very complete information updating the situation in Somalia and the recent developments in the peace initiative presented to us by both Under-Secretary-General Kieran Prendergast and the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, Ambassador Olhaye.

We are dealing with a complex conflict that has lasted for too many years despite the fact that Somalia, unlike other African countries and countries in other parts of the world, is religiously and ethnically a homogeneous society whose territory does not have a particularly uneven distribution of natural resources. Nevertheless, this has not prevented the violent break-up of the Somali State, which started at the beginning of the last decade.

We are concerned that efforts undertaken by the international community in the past to resolve the conflict in Somalia have yielded meagre results and that, as a consequence, its population continues to bear the burden of this tragedy on its back, with the terrible

humanitarian consequences we are all aware of. We believe that the time has come to overcome the "Somalia syndrome", and for the Council to work actively, together with the other actors involved, towards a definitive solution. This attitude will also have positive effects on our approaches to other African conflicts.

The peace initiative launched by Djibouti last year must be the main instrument for making progress towards a peaceful solution of the Somali conflict and must be supported by the Council. We would like to associate ourselves with delegations that preceded in expressing our appreciation to the Government of Djibouti for the efforts it is making to move the plan forward, which have cost it considerable financial resources. The opportunity created by that initiative must be used to move in a positive direction that is acceptable to all Somali society, since it is the principal party concerned and the ultimate beneficiary of all the efforts for peace.

The task of rebuilding the country, as outlined in the plan presented by President Omar Guelleh, includes all of civil society, not only the warlords. We must be clear on this aspect. Participation in the National Peace Conference in Djibouti by all sectors from all regions is necessary for it to be representative and to achieve results that can be implemented immediately. In this respect, we urge that participation in the Conference not be hindered.

Somalia is no stranger to the grave humanitarian situation confronting the entire Horn of Africa region. In this regard, I need only cite the statement made by Ms. Catherine Bertini of the World Food Programme on 16 May 2000: "The lives of 13 million persons in the Horn of Africa are at risk."

We also reiterate our concern at recent information indicating ongoing violence and inter-clan confrontations, particularly in the southern region, and at the negative impact of violence on humanitarian assistance tasks. This assistance is increasingly necessary, given the ongoing deterioration of the living conditions of the population. We must pay our sincerest tribute to the self-sacrificing work of the humanitarian workers, who, under very difficult conditions, continue to provide assistance to the Somali people — in some cases, even at the cost of their own lives. The security and safety of humanitarian personnel must be respected.

We wish to conclude by reaffirming our position in favour of respect for the maintenance of the independence, territorial integrity and unity of Somalia.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Prendergast for his informative and detailed briefing on Somalia. It is good to have the Security Council discussing Somalia. It has, perhaps, been neglected for too long. We welcome the participation of Ambassador Olhaye in this important debate. His briefing on Djibouti's commendable efforts, led by President Guelleh, to restore peace and stability to Somalia was helpful and interesting.

We support the main principles guiding Djibouti's initiative: the need to make the peace process inclusive; the importance of enhancing the role of civil society to build peace from the bottom up, rather than impose it from above; and, in this context, the need to marginalize the destructive influence of the warlords. We acknowledge the fact that many Somalis have participated in Djibouti's peace process, but we are concerned that some elements of Somali society are still not represented. We would encourage all regions of Somalia to take part in the peace and reconciliation process. Only this will create the environment for an inclusive determination by the Somali people of a lasting political solution to the problems of the Somali Republic.

This is an important initiative. Sir Kieran Prendergast called it a unique political experience for Somalis, and we must not let it lose momentum. The longer the talks continue — and the progress made in this month's Conference is encouraging in this respect — the greater the chance that more and different elements of Somali society will become involved. We urge the Somali people to continue down this difficult path and to embrace this opportunity for peace.

Djibouti's efforts should not be seen as a quick fix. They constitute a process towards a lasting and viable solution to a complicated and entrenched problem. As such, we would urge Djibouti to proceed with caution. To impose a Government without the broadest possible consultation of all groups may only result in undermining the relative peace and stability in some self-administered areas, for example the northern regions. In this respect, we very much hope that it will indeed be possible to establish a transitional national

authority. We also welcome the United Nations involvement in this initiative, and we particularly commend the efforts of David Stephen and of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia.

We agree with the Secretary-General's call for the international financial institutions to exercise flexibility in taking account of the unique situation presented by Somalia. We would support the idea of the international financial institutions engaging in negotiations with administrations in stable areas as a first step. They should, of course, look carefully at issues of transparency and accountability before making financial commitments.

The grave humanitarian situation disturbs us all deeply. Somalia continues to suffer from food shortages and health problems, including serious cholera epidemics. Many Somalis are displaced. We commend the brave and tireless efforts of humanitarian personnel working in this very insecure and challenging situation. We must insist on proper protection for them. We call on all conflicting parties to recognize the impartiality of the relief agencies and to afford their personnel all possible security and cooperation.

Somalia is a poverty-stricken country, ravaged by failure of governance, conflict, drought, flooding, epidemics and food shortages, yet arms still continue to flow into the country. All Governments must comply with the arms embargo established by Security Council resolution 733 (1992). We commend the efforts of Ambassador Ben Mustapha, as Chairman of the sanctions Committee, to try and revitalize this Committee and make its work more effective.

The United Kingdom will continue to follow the situation in Somalia closely. We stand, as always, ready to respond to urgent humanitarian and emergency needs, and take note of the concern expressed on funding by both the Under-Secretary-General and Ambassador Olhaye.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): We join the other Security Council members in thanking Mr. Prendergast for the detailed and complete briefing he gave us on developments in the situation in Somalia. I also wish to thank Mr. Olhaye, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, for the detailed information he shared with us regarding the progress made in the implementation of the peace process. I wish to pay a tribute on this occasion to President Guelleh for his commendable initiative and efforts to convene the Somalia National Peace Conference.

I would like to reiterate my country's commitment to a peaceful settlement of the Somali crisis, which must take into consideration the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Somalia, thereby promoting national reconciliation in that country. A political solution to the crisis on the basis of the broadest possible participation of all components of Somali society is, in our opinion, a prerequisite for the success of all efforts under way. The restoration of peace and stability in Somalia also requires the financial and technical support of States and international organizations for the Djibouti Government's efforts.

The holding of the Somalia National Peace Conference at Arta in Djibouti represents important progress towards a definitive and comprehensive solution in the framework of the peace process. Above and beyond the Conference itself, that meeting reflects the determination and commitment of the Somali people to moving forward and to participating in reconstruction and the establishment of a national transitional authority.

In this regard, we appeal to the parties that have not yet joined the peace process to avoid hampering the participation of those who wish to participate in it. We believe that all Somalis must take this opportunity to participate in restoring lasting stability and security to Somalia, which for decades has experienced only destabilization and where at least one entire generation has not had the opportunity to lead a normal life in safety and with the hope of being able to plan its long-term future.

My country, being African and Arab, has worked tirelessly for Somalia to become reconciled with itself and for the Somalis, who are entitled to live in peace, to become aware of their common destiny, which has been and remains impossible to shape outside the framework of a common national identity.

There is no need to emphasize that everyone shares the disquiet felt by all Somalis when they hear it said that a given crisis, whether in Africa or elsewhere, can be compared to Somalia because of the derogatory connotations of the name of that country — which is in fact full of goodwill and inhabited by a noble people with a great history and high hopes. Seeing the image of that fraternal country used as a media leitmotif is

painful to us in Tunisia, throughout the Arab world, in Africa and elsewhere, because we know that the Somali people do not deserve to be held up as a bad example.

As Chairman of the Security Council Committee on Somalia sanctions I have, with the valuable assistance and support of all other members of the Committee, revived the Committee's meeting with a view to creating the best conditions for strict respect for the arms embargo. Our approach in the Committee cannot and must not be perceived as punitive; quite the contrary, we see it — and all members will agree — as a way to make an effective contribution to ensuring that the language of weapons, which has for long years only fuelled the cycle of violence and discord in Somalia, will yield to negotiation and to dialogue, which alone can make possible a national solution in Somalia and lasting reconciliation among Somalis.

In our work in that Committee, we have involved all States members of the United Nations, of the Organization of African Unity, of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and of the League of Arab States to help ensure that the embargo is observed and that it yields the results expected of it. It is in that framework that the Committee intends to send a mission to the region in order to secure the broadest possible participation by the parties concerned. The Secretariat is now making arrangements for the mission.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

I too wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Prendergast, and the representative of Djibouti, Mr. Olhaye, for their briefings on the situation. I shall confine myself to making a few general comments, as the representative of Portugal will later make a statement on behalf of the European Union, which my delegation fully endorses.

In the view of my delegation, the holding of another open Security Council debate on the situation in Somalia is of particular importance for three reasons. First of all, it shows that the Council is committed to the resolution of all crises, both those that are covered by the international press and those that are no longer in the spotlight. I want to state clearly that there are no "forgotten" crises on the agenda of the Security Council. The failure of one method of intervention should not automatically lead to inertia. We must learn from our past difficulties to see how the United Nations can support peace in Somalia and facilitate the rebirth of that country.

Secondly, this debate is important because it once again underscores the Council's concern for sustaining and supporting regional peace initiatives whenever the opportunity arises. Here I would refer, of course, to the initiative of the signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the initiative of the Economic Community of West African States on Sierra Leone, to the Organization of African Unity initiative to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and, finally, to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development initiative for Somalia. With respect to the latter, we especially welcome the involvement of Djibouti through the initiative taken by President Guelleh to secure a lasting solution to the crisis in Somalia.

Thirdly, this debate is important because it will enable us finally to endorse a process which, although it has sometimes been difficult, has nonetheless been exemplary. Unlike previous peace plans for Somalia — which, I need hardly recall, have all failed — the initiative of the President of Djibouti refuses to let the success of the plan depend on the whims of the warlords. Ambassador Olhaye's statement earlier this morning was eloquent testimony to that. The peace process led by President Guelleh has given a voice to civil society: to the population that has been a victim of the conflict. Elders, intellectuals, local non-governmental organizations, women's groups, religious leaders and exiles have all without exception had an opportunity to state their views about the future of their country, and have demonstrated their profound weariness at the continuation of the conflict.

France therefore considers it very important that the international community now give unequivocal support to Djibouti — not merely moral support but support with a financial dimension as well, which will make it possible to see through to the end a process that is off to such a good start.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset, Mr. President, to thank you and to congratulate you on the work that you and your colleagues in the French delegation have done to ensure the success of the work of the Security Council this month, especially as regards transparency and your excellent relationship with non-members of the Council. I am saying this not merely as a traditional expression of appreciation, but as a statement of facts that have been noted by other speakers as well. We hope that all other States, especially States members of the Council, will follow your example in this regard.

I wish to express our appreciation also to Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his important statement and for his valuable advice and serious-minded proposals. His advice to the Council not to yield to hopelessness was extremely valuable and ought to be followed. We also thank the representative of Djibouti for his comprehensive presentation.

Somalia has long been left on the sidelines and neglected by the United Nations due to the erroneous perception of certain States that they represented the international community and could do whatever they wished on its behalf. Action was taken inappropriately. The situation in Somalia had been intolerable for a very long time. That situation was rejected by the international community as a whole, just as it had been rejected by the Somali people themselves.

We hope that this meeting will represent a concrete new beginning in the revival of the international community's interest in Somalia and that it will assist the Somali people in regaining unity, stability and the achievement of development through their territory.

The initiative of Mr. Omar Guelleh, the President of Djibouti, could not have come at a better time. It requires the full material and political support of the international community if it is to achieve its objectives — material support to enable Djibouti to continue hosting the reconciliation Conference and political support to bring pressure to bear on all Somali parties to participate successfully in the Conference.

We should not stand aside wondering or expressing doubt about the possibility of participation or non-participation. All those who object to or display scepticism at the possibility of the Djibouti initiative's success will drop their objection and scepticism when faced with the international community's determination to support the initiative and ensure its successful conclusion. We do not expect things to change overnight, but with perseverance and determination we will realize our desired objectives. Therefore, we should not cease bringing pressure to bear on the parties that object to the convening of the Conference to participate in it and to work for its successful conclusion.

My country's interest in and concern for Somalia is not recent. It dates back to the beginning of the crisis. We have invited the Somali faction leaders and held conferences and meetings in Libya and in other capitals and countries, all in the interest of national reconciliation in Somalia. We have participated in and supported, both materially and financially, all conferences aimed at that same objective. We have contributed to improving relations between the various Somali factions and neighbouring countries, such as Ethiopia. Our interest and concern for Somalia dates back to the beginning of the crisis and is demonstrated by the presence of the Libyan diplomatic mission, which may be the only one remaining in Somalia, in spite of deteriorating security conditions. My country has declared its financial and political support for the Djibouti President's initiative and continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the Somali people.

My country's position vis-à-vis the crisis in Somalia is based on the following objectives: reunification of the territories and people of Somalia; rejection of fragmentation; peace and stability in a united and independent Somalia; dealing with all representatives of the Somali factions and urging them to come to the negotiating table to settle their differences by peaceful means; and the rejection of violence or any attempt to reach solutions militarily. The United Nations should not let Somalia down; it should return to Somalia in a forceful way.

We would also like to stress that the Security Council is about to take practical measures to support the initiative of the President of Djibouti, both politically and materially, which should enable Somalia to regain its normalcy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the Permanent Representative of Yemen. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, Sir, allow me to congratulate you very sincerely on your wise and skilful management of the work of the Council this month. I would also like to thank your predecessor, the Ambassador of China.

Our country is concerned at the situation and developments in Somalia because of the historic ties between our two countries. These ties have evolved into a very close family relationship in our community of States. Events in Somalia have an impact on Yemen and its people. We are host to many Somali refugees and are suffering from additional social and economic burdens that are beyond our resources to sustain. My country has therefore consistently contributed to the international community's efforts to resolve the situation in Somalia in a peaceful, democratic way.

The Republic of Yemen has already convened a meeting of all Somali parties in Sana'a to negotiate and to find a solution that would restore statehood and government to Somalia, as well as security, peace and stability.

At one time or another, we have all tested many different and contradictory initiatives, and sometimes parallel formulas, to try to resolve the crisis in Somalia, but none of them have broken the impasse. That is why the Djibouti initiative was taken and blessed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the League of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement. This initiative should be supported by the United Nations and by the international community.

We pay tribute here to the Government of Djibouti and to its President, Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, for having personally endorsed the initiative and for having held a Conference on national dialogue in Djibouti on Somalia. We believe that his initiative gives grounds for much hope, because it is a real attempt to restore stability and security, not only in Somalia but also in the entire Horn of Africa. I wish to pay tribute to the statement made by the Ambassador of Djibouti, as well as the steps he enumerated for holding a meeting on 15 July.

We should also stress one other important thing, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (document S/1999/882): the people of Somalia are primarily responsible for finding a solution to their situation. No one can help them if they do not help themselves. Therefore, we call upon the United Nations and the international community to guarantee a real presence in Somalia, through civil institutions, to help that country resolve its crisis, create its State and institutions and regain its role and status in the international community. I wish here to stress Security Council resolution 733 (1992), which calls upon all external parties to comply with the resolution and to see to its implementation, so that the conflict between rivals outside Somalia does not spill over into Somalia itself. Otherwise, the conflict will go on, to the detriment of all efforts and attempts made by the United Nations and the international community to put an end to this tragic situation, which has gone on for almost two decades now.

Attention should be paid to the devastation of natural resources and the looting that has gone on in Somalia. We call on all interested parties to respect the sovereignty of Somalia and to terminate any action that might lead to a transfer of control over these resources.

The President (*spoke in* French): The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to express to you, Sir, our great appreciation for the interest in the conflict in Somalia that you have demonstrated during your presidency of the Council this month. It will undoubtedly contribute to successfully and appropriately restoring the question of Somalia to the agenda of the Security Council and of the international community in the coming months. This is particularly true given the developments taking place on this issue within the framework of the Djibouti initiative.

I would like to stress once again the approach to the Somali crisis that Egypt has maintained consistently since the crisis broke out. The elements of this approach are the preservation of the unity and independence of Somalia and opposition to the principle of the division of Somalia and to the establishment of autonomous entities within the country. In seeking to promote this approach, Egypt has been making use of its contacts in various international forums and with people involved in

Somalia. Because we believe in the unity of Somalia, we seek to maintain a balance in our approach to and contacts among all Somali provinces. We are providing humanitarian and technical assistance to all Somalis. We are eager to develop our relations with the two administrations of Somaliland and Puntland in the framework of maintaining one Somalia.

Egypt believes that responsibility for the solution to the Somali question rests with the Somalis themselves, including the leaders of civil society and of the warring factions. We believe that international intervention, be it collective or individual, must be in the context of support for the realization of the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia. Egypt therefore welcomes and supports the Djibouti initiative. We bless the efforts of President Ismail Guelleh and express our confidence that he can carry out this difficult mission.

Egypt also believes that the Djibouti initiative represents an appropriate framework, commensurate with the Somali situation and environment, for the solution of the conflict. This, in our view, will guarantee the return of stability and peace to Somalia and ultimately lead to stability in the Horn of Africa region.

The Djibouti initiative met with success during the first phase of the Somalia National Peace Conference. The meetings held under this formula were able to settle many of the differences between the warring factions and clans, particularly between the Hawiye and the Darod. We consider this to be a positive step towards the realization of national reconciliation. We hope that the second phase of the Somalia National Peace Conference in Djibouti will lead to a solution to the political questions, including the establishment of executive and legislative State institutions, in a way that guarantees a calm transition in which the Somalis can reunify their territories.

The upcoming phase requires us to work seriously to help the Somalis to recover their national territories and territorial integrity and to guarantee that they are able to overcome the crisis after a full decade of human tragedy and suffering. We therefore underscore the importance of the international community's support for the Djibouti initiative. We believe that the international community must provide all the assistance necessary to urge the various Somali leaders who have chosen to boycott the initiative to approach it in a positive manner.

We believe that it is important to increase humanitarian assistance to Somalis throughout Somalia and to contribute to rebuilding the Somali infrastructure. We also believe that the international community must seriously consider coordinating international demining efforts, since landmines prevent a return to normal life in Somalia. We must also seriously implement Security Council resolution 733 (1992) regarding the arms embargo against Somalia.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Mr. Hussein Hassouna. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hassouna (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, our sincere thanks for allowing our delegation to address the Council under your presidency this month. You are from a country that we hold in high esteem. We cherish your country's friendship with the Arab world and its support of our just causes.

The League of Arab States firmly believes in the importance of the role played by the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. The cooperation of the League of Arab States with the Council is based on our position of principle, which is embodied in the League's participation in the Council's work, its cooperation with the Council and its continuous support for the Council's efforts.

Our delegation would like to recall that the relationship of the Somali people with the Arab nation has deep historical roots. It was crowned by Somalia's joining the League of Arab States in 1974. This historical and organic relationship requires us not to abandon the fraternal Somali people and to continue to support them fully, so that they can find a way out of their current predicament and regain authority over their national soil and unified country. The League will stand side by side with the Somali people in helping them rebuild and rehabilitate their country, so that they can resume their prestigious place among the peoples of the world.

There is no doubt that the Arab, African and Islamic character of Somalia, as well as its membership in the United Nations, demand that all the international organizations to which Somalia belongs continue to cooperate and to coordinate their efforts so that peace

and stability — the coveted objectives — can be restored to Somalia.

We firmly believe, however, that the solution to the Somali question lies in the hands of the Somalis themselves. They should be supported and assisted to achieve this solution in an objective manner, avoiding the pursuit of narrow, selfish interests.

The League of Arab States therefore welcomes the convening of this plenary meeting of the Council. We hope that the solutions and conclusions arrived at will expedite the finding of a solution to the predicament of the Somali people.

We hope that we can do what is necessary to build peace in Somalia, but this cannot be accomplished by good wishes alone. We must be determined to overcome the problems and obstacles of the past and agree to integrate all of our regional and international efforts in order to realize our desired objective.

The League of Arab States has made concerted efforts to bring about peace in Somalia. It has participated in all efforts made at the regional and international levels to find a solution to this question. Our objective has always been the restoration of peace, stability and security in Somalia and national reconciliation among the Somalis, so that they can establish a broad-based government that will assist in rebuilding the country, along with Member States and the League of Arab States, and that will enable it to play its rightful role in the Arab, African and national arenas.

History will show that the Council of the League of Arab States was the first to discuss the situation in Somalia, in September 1991. Its resolution 5097, adopted at that time, was the first decision taken at the regional or international level on the Somali crisis. All Somali factions welcomed that resolution, and international and regional organizations used it as a guideline in addressing the Somali crisis.

The Council of the League of Arab States thus welcomed Security Council resolution 733 (1992) imposing an arms embargo on Somalia. It considered the resolution as a necessary step on the road to the integration of international efforts aimed at finding a solution to the Somali crisis. The League of Arab States affirmed its full readiness to cooperate with the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), among others, to put an end to the crisis in both its humanitarian and political aspects. This was made clear by the League of Arab States' participation, with the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, in all regional and international meetings held on the question of Somalia.

The League of Arab States has also made concrete contributions by supporting Security Council resolutions on Somalia and by providing assistance to both Somali operations. Many member States of the League of Arab States participated in the peacekeeping forces that were sent to Somalia at that time. Moreover, the League of Arab States hosted, at its permanent headquarters in Cairo, a meeting of the heads of Somali clans as well as other meetings that also included representatives of the United Nations, the OAU and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Proof of the importance that the League of Arab States attaches to this question is the fact that the Somali question has been inscribed on the agenda of the Council of the League of Arab States since 1991, thereby ensuring that developments in the conflict are continually monitored by the highest authority in the League.

Ever since the outbreak of the Somali conflict, the Arab countries have featured prominently among those that have provided humanitarian assistance to the Somali people. The aid provided by the Arab States so far totals more than $150 million. The Arab States that participated in the second peacekeeping operation in Somalia focused on the humanitarian aspect of their task, as evidenced by the distribution of food assistance and the provision of top-notch medical services through their field hospitals. These actions won the confidence and admiration of the Somali people.

Moreover, the secretariat of the League of Arab States continued, in 1992 and 1993, to send medical personnel and equipment, and it also provided emergency food assistance to the victims of the 1997 floods in Somalia, in cooperation with the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator. Its humanitarian efforts are ongoing; for instance, it provides scholarships to Somali students who are studying at universities and institutions of higher education in the Arab world.

As concerns regional and international initiatives on Somalia, which include the signing of the Sodere and Cairo agreements, the Somali crisis has shown the

need for integrated and consolidated efforts on the part of the international community. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States therefore recommended the establishment of a regional and international coordinating mechanism that would include all subregional, regional and international organizations as well as other States concerned, with the goal of providing assistance to the Somalis and enabling them to bring about reconciliation, guarantee the implementation of their agreements, avoid potential conflict between regional and international efforts, and bring all Somali actors and clans together to enable them to fulfil their commitments. That mechanism succeeded in realizing its objectives in an effective and meritorious manner.

Among the many initiatives taken on Somalia, the League of Arab States, when it met in Beirut in March of this year, welcomed in particular the initiative of the President of Djibouti, which is aimed at bringing about national reconciliation in Somalia in a comprehensive manner that guarantees the unity and territorial integrity of that country. As an affirmation of the support of the League of Arab States for the initiative, the League participated in the inaugural session of the Somalia National Peace Conference on 2 May of this year. In his opening statement, the head of the League's delegation highlighted the Arab States' support for the Djibouti initiative and called on all of the various actors and factions in Somalia to use this opportunity to bring about national reconciliation.

We believe that Djibouti has exerted considerable efforts and shouldered a heavy burden in order to convene this Conference and ensure its success. The League of Arab States therefore appeals once again to the international community to provide financial assistance to the Government of Djibouti so that it can continue its efforts in the area of reconciliation and so that we can achieve the desired outcome. Needless to say, the secretariat of the League of Arab States has already provided financial assistance to the Government of Djibouti so that it can continue to shoulder the responsibility of holding the Conference.

In conclusion, allow me to outline the elements of what is required of the Council at this very important and critical time and to state what we expect from it at this stage, which, we believe, is in accordance with the key role of the United Nations in the building and maintenance of peace. This is a topic that has recently been discussed by the Council.

First, we affirm the role of the Security Council in supporting and enhancing the peace process in Somalia through the adoption of the initiative of the President of Djibouti. It should urge the international community to support the Somalia National Peace Conference politically and financially and to work to establish a mechanism that would guarantee the implementation of the agreements reached at that Conference, in order for the initiative to be crowned with success. It should also urge the Somali actors that have not yet responded to the initiative to come on board quickly.

Second, the Security Council should enforce its resolution 733 (1992) on the arms embargo on Somalia and reactivate the sanctions committee in order to put in place the mechanisms necessary to halt the arms trade within and to Somalia and to strengthen the embargo.

Third, the Security Council should urge the continuation of coordination between the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations, including the League of Arab States, the OAU, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in order to support the positive role of these organizations in resolving the question of Somalia.

Fourth, it should work to restore confidence among the Somali parties to the conflict on the one hand, and between these parties and the United Nations on the other, so that the settlement efforts will be successful.

Fifth, it should confirm respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Somaliland, and urge all concerned to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Somalia. Ensuring a permanent peace is, first and foremost, a responsibility to be shouldered by the Somalis themselves. The international community will spare no effort to support them in realizing this objective.

Sixth, the Council should call upon all the parties to the conflict to respect the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law, particularly those relating to the protection of civilians in time of war, and to spare the organizations working in the humanitarian field.

Seventh, it should support the establishment of the trust fund that has been proposed to finance efforts

to achieve peace in Somalia and translate it into action by encouraging a return to social and economic activities in the country in support of peace and stability there.

Eighth, it should appeal to the States and international and regional organizations concerned to provide assistance for demining activities in Somalia.

Ninth, it should give due importance to the question of Somali refugees in neighbouring countries and elsewhere, and urge the international community to provide humanitarian assistance so that the Somali people can overcome their predicament, which is getting worse, in most of the Somali territories.

Tenth, it is important for the Security Council to consider the Somali question periodically so as to follow up developments and facilitate a positive response in this respect.

Since, thanks to the efforts that have been made to resolve the Somali crisis, we finally seem to be able to see light at the end of the tunnel, let us proceed steadily towards the objective for which we have met today, so that the brotherly Somali people may at long last enjoy the life and dignity that they deserve.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Ethiopia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Tessema (Ethiopia): I wish to begin by expressing my delegation's gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening today's open meeting to review the situation in Somalia. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Sir Kieran Prendergast for his comprehensive report on the situation in Somalia in general, and the ongoing peace process in particular, on which the Council was also briefed in detail this morning by the Permanent Representative of Djibouti.

This open meeting of the Security Council indeed comes at a crucial juncture in the Somali peace process, marked by the Somalia National Peace Conference currently under way in Djibouti. The peace initiative put forward by President Ismail Omar Guelleh of the Republic of Djibouti, which has been endorsed by both the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), seeks to assist the Somalis in achieving national reconciliation that would culminate in the establishment of a central authority.

The Government of Ethiopia has on various occasions expressed its full support for the initiative of President Guelleh, and welcomes the progress made thus far, including in the work of the second phase of the Arta Conference, which began on 15 June. Ethiopia, as an immediate neighbour with a particular interest in peace and stability in Somalia, and as a country with a mandate from both the OAU and IGAD, continues to monitor closely the situation in Somalia and to fully support the ongoing peace efforts.

The tragic situation in Somalia, and especially the developments in the past two years, have clearly demonstrated that the absence of peace and central authority in Somalia not only constitutes a serious threat to the very survival of Somalia as a nation, but also poses a serious challenge to the peace and stability of the Horn of Africa subregion in general and to that of Somalia's immediate neighbours, including Ethiopia, in particular.

It is with this in mind that the seventh summit of heads of State and Government of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, held in Djibouti on 26 November 1999, condemned the actions of third parties that, in collaboration with terrorist groups, sought to destabilize the situation in the region, and emphasized that

> "Somalia cannot be allowed to be a haven for all sorts of criminals and terrorist groups that have the intention of making the whole region lawless and outside the rule of law."

In the past few years, efforts have been made by the countries of our region, under the aegis of IGAD, to promote peace and national reconciliation in Somalia. However, these efforts have not yet brought the desired result, mainly because of the lack of commitment on the part of the leaders of Somalia and the failure of external actors to coordinate their peace efforts and initiatives.

The experience gained over the past several years has shown that peace and stability in Somalia will continue to elude us as long as some in the country continue to resist the ideas of local accommodation, power-sharing and a broad-based grass-roots participation in the political life of Somali society. Attempts by some to create a monopoly of power without accommodating others have proved futile, and have undermined the aspiration of the people of Somalia for peace and national reconciliation. This

situation should not be allowed to continue, and the time has now come for the international community to send a clear message to all those concerned that the people of Somalia cannot be held hostage to such narrow and personal interests.

Needless to say, the primary responsibility for peace and national reconciliation in Somalia rests with its own people and leaders. The international community at large, and countries involved in peace efforts in Somalia, in particular, can make an important contribution only if their efforts are undertaken in a coordinated manner. Parallel initiatives should be avoided. The international community, and the United Nations in particular, should continue their support for the ongoing peace process by providing political, financial and material support. To this end, we once again call upon the Security Council to establish a trust fund, as recommended by the United Nations Secretary-General, to support the commendable efforts being made by the Republic of Djibouti.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Ethiopia's continued commitment to the search for durable peace and national reconciliation in Somalia, which is also indispensable for the peace and security of Ethiopia and the entire subregion of the Horn of Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): The last speaker on my list is the representative of Portugal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal) (*spoke in French*): I promise to be brief.

(*spoke in English*)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

I would like to commend you, Mr. President, and the members of this Council, for organizing this open debate on Somalia. Indeed, I commend you for all the open debates that you have organized, and for allowing other Members of the Organization to participate in them.

I would like very much to thank Under-Secretary-General Prendergast for his informative briefing and the Permanent Representative of Djibouti for his detailed information on the Conference currently being held in Djibouti. Information on the Somali peace process is welcome and long overdue.

The European Union reiterates its support for the Djibouti peace initiative, aimed at achieving peace and stability in Somalia. We welcome the full involvement of civil society. The European Union stresses the need to take into account the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Somalia. In this regard, the European Union hopes that the ongoing Somalia National Peace Conference, which is taking place in Djibouti, will provide a decisive contribution to the restoration of the peace and stability that the Somali people deserve.

We call for the freedom of movement and safety of all United Nations personnel and other humanitarian workers to be guaranteed. In this context, the European Union strongly condemns the attack on a United Nations aircraft in Kismayo airport last month and deplores the killing and intimidation of humanitarian personnel. The insecure situation seriously hampers the delivery of relief assistance to the population in need, namely, internally displaced people.

The European Union is especially concerned with the flow of arms into Somalia in violation of Security Council resolution 733 (1992), which established an arms embargo. It is essential that all States cooperate and provide information on violations of the arms embargo in order to fully implement the Security Council resolution.

The European Union will continue to support the Somali people, providing the necessary assistance. Since 1992, the European Union, through the Humanitarian Office of the European Commission, has been constantly involved in Somalia. During the intervention of the United Nations Operation in Somalia, our assistance amounted to 12 million Euros per year. Over the years, the European Union has focused its attention on those areas where basic preconditions for longer-term and more ambitious development activities do not exist. We have also been a major player in Somalia since 1994, through our financing of large rehabilitation programmes and, until

recently, through our Chairmanship of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body.

The Horn of Africa region is experiencing a humanitarian crisis affecting millions of innocent people. It is now time to call for a strong commitment to the ongoing Somali peace process. The responsibility for achieving genuine national reconciliation and peace rests with the Somalis themselves.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.